



During each of the last five decades--beginning in the early 1950s--The U.S.-Jordanian development partnership has been an important feature of the relationship between the two countries. The legacy of these early programs lives on in a variety of ways. Thousands of Jordanians have benefited from a variety of programs administered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). U.S.-Jordanian cooperation over the past 50 years in health, education, transport, agriculture, business development and other fields has left a lasting mark and forged professional ties between countless Jordanians and Americans.

When USAID's predecessor agency opened its first office in Amman in 1952, Jordan was a small, agricultural society of little over a million people. Today, almost half a century later, Jordan has emerged as a middle income country with some 4.5 million people, an educated workforce and an increasingly diverse economy.

Much work remains to be done. Nonetheless, the progress achieved by Jordan is impressive, especially for a country that has no oil and few other natural resources. Instead, Jordan has had to rely on the creativity and skills of its people. This creativity and these skills remain as the bedrock of the Jordanian economy as it faces the challenges and opportunities of a new millennium.



◆ Historic Overview

The history of Jordan's development since the early 1950s to some extent mirrors the history of the USAID program in the country. Early economic assistance programs focused on building schools, establishing health systems, constructing roads and irrigation works, renovating tourist sites, and training Jordanians in a variety of technical fields. With the basic infrastructure in place, the U.S.-Jordanian development partnership expanded into new areas. For example, in the mid-1980s support for a growing private sector received strong emphasis.

The United States Government's commitment to Jordan's development goals remains firm. In 1998, for example, U.S. economic assistance to Jordan totaled \$140 million, giving Jordan one of the largest USAID programs worldwide. President Clinton has asked Congress to increase funding



levels for Jordan to \$200 million per year for the years 1999 and 2000. Current USAID activities in Jordan are focused on (1) improving water resource management; (2) improving the access to and the quality of primary and reproductive health care; and (3) increasing economic opportunities for Jordanians.

◆ A Rich Legacy in a Variety of Fields

Over the last five decades, the U.S.-Jordanian development partnership has created a rich legacy of achievement and a strong foundation on which to base Jordan's continued economic development. Some of the more notable accomplishments of this half century of partnership are detailed below.

Water:

The water sector has been the single largest recipient of U.S. assistance funds, beginning in the early 1950s with the renovation of several dozen ancient Roman and Byzantine water cisterns. Major projects during the 1960s, 70s and 1980s included construction of the Wadi Ziglab Dam and the King Abdullah (East Ghor) Canal, several wastewater treatment plants and the Deir-Alla-Zai water conveyance and treatment system. Given continued water scarcity, USAID and the government of Jordan are carrying out projects designed to strengthen water sector institutions, increase water use efficiency, and improve wastewater quality. Significant water projects now underway or in the planning stages include the new water and wastewater treatment system at Wadi Mousa; expansion of the Aqaba wastewater treatment plant, originally built with USAID funds; upgrading of the Zai water treatment plant; and the rehabilitation of the Greater Amman water distribution system.



Health and Population:

Jordan and the United States have long worked together on public health projects in Jordan. Early U.S.-funded assistance projects built and equipped the Central Government Laboratory, established a tuberculosis center, launched Jordan's first School of Nursing, constructed maternal and child health care centers, and developed and expanded immunization programs. The eradication of malaria in Jordan was a milestone in the early years of the development partnership. Current USAID-funded public health activities build on these earlier programs. In particular, a concerted effort is underway to improve maternal and child health care through developing a network of Comprehensive Postpartum Centers and Primary Health Care Centers throughout Jordan. Public awareness campaigns and other initiatives related to primary health care are also supported. Finally, efforts are underway to identify and introduce new financing options aimed at ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of primary health care in Jordan.



Economic Opportunity:

Jordan's economic vitality has always been central to the U.S./Jordan development partnership. In the mid-1980s the expansion of the private sector emerged as a centerpiece of USAID activities in Jordan. The series of initiatives launched at that time included management development projects, loan guarantees for small enterprises, and a commodity import program focused on the private sector. The United States and the Government of Jordan continue to view the private sector's ability to spur investment, create jobs and increase exports as the key to Jordan's economic future. USAID is currently working with Jordanian Ministries, financial institutions and NGOs on a variety of programs aimed at tapping the private sector's capacity to increase economic opportunity for all Jordanians. For Jordanian entrepreneurs, this includes a new micro-lending program launched in 1998 that makes loans available to even the smallest businesses. In 1999 a new Jordanian-US business partnership was inaugurated which offers small and medium sized Jordanian businesses a range of world class business consulting services. Finally, USAID is working closely with the Government of Jordan on implementing the policy reforms needed for the Kingdom to qualify for membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO).



Transport, Energy, and Industry: While the United States no longer directly funds projects in Jordan's transport, energy and industrial sectors, early USAID projects made significant contributions in all of these areas. Road projects have included construction of the Amman-Jerusalem highway as well as the road from Amman to the Syrian border and the Ras En-Naqab Rum junction road. In addition, U.S. economic assistance was used to build link roads to Wadi Rum, Wadi Mousa, Mt. Nebo and Ma'an. Historically, other USAID assistance programs have included rural and urban electrification as well as financing for the Arab Potash Company.

Agriculture:

Development of the Jordan Valley remains one of the most outstanding legacies of USAID's five decades of working side by side with Jordan's citizens. The first plan for development of the valley was initiated as early as 1952. During the following decades, U.S. assistance was used to build canals, provide seeds and fertilizer, eradicate malaria, and to build schools, health facilities, housing, a telephone system, and commercial centers. Other agricultural projects have in the past included extension programs, livestock improvements, and the development of a network of agricultural research stations across the country.



Tourism:

Well presented historical monuments, a stunning physical landscape, and a variety of recreational opportunities have all contributed to the emergence of tourism as one of Jordan's leading sources of foreign exchange. USAID has also played a role, in part through its work with the Ministry of Tourism to build tourist facilities and to restore important historical sites in Amman, Jerash, Madaba, Karak, Petra, Um-Qais, Pella and elsewhere. Although the United States no longer provides direct support to the tourism sector, the Jordanian tourism industry can still benefit greatly from current USAID projects. For example, the new water and wastewater treatment plant in Wadi Mousa will help provide environmental protection for Petra, Jordan's premiere tourist destination. Similarly, Jordanian entrepreneurs interested in tourism can benefit from the credit, technical assistance and marketing skills provided through programs that promote economic opportunity.



Education and Training:

Education and training have always figured prominently in the U.S. assistance programs in Jordan. For example, more than 3,000 scholarships were granted to Jordanian students to study at U.S. universities as well as at the American University in Beirut from the early 1950s until the mid-1990s. Early programs also resulted in the establishment of a School of Nursing, the Amman Trade School and the Amman Teacher Training College, all during the 1950s. In addition, USAID financed the construction and equipping of about 100 schools which educate nearly 150,000 students each year. With the emergence of the University of Jordan and other educational institutions in Jordan, USAID no longer funds long-term scholarships. However, short-term training--as often as possible at institutions within Jordan--remains an important USAID activity, whether in programs focused on health and family planning, water resource management or economic opportunity.

